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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 001931

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TAGS: PTER PREL PGOV AR

SUBJECT: ARGENTINA'S PRESIDENT CALLS ON IRAN TO COOPERATE  
ON AMIA AT UNGA

REF: BUENOS AIRES 1906

Classified By: Ambassador E. Anthony Wayne for reasons 1.4(b)and(d)

**¶11. (C) Summary:** Media pundits, Jewish groups, and Argentine government officials uniformly praised President Kirchner's strong call during his September 25 address to the UN General Assembly for the Government of Iran to cooperate fully with Argentina's justice system in the investigation of the 1994 terrorist bombing of the AMIA Jewish community center in Buenos Aires. AMIA special prosecutor Alberto Nisman was delighted with Kirchner's comments. He tells us that he continues to work on strengthening the case against Iran and Hizballah. End Summary.

**¶12. (U)** In his September 25 speech before the UN General Assembly, President Kirchner called for Iran to cooperate fully with the investigation into the 1994 AMIA terrorist bombing. Kirchner asked "the Islamic Republic of Iran to accept and respect the jurisdiction of the Argentine justice system, and to effectively cooperate with the Argentine judges in submitting to trial those persons implicated in case. Unfortunately the Islamic Republic of Iran has not provided all the required collaboration with the Argentine judiciary to clear up the facts of the case." Kirchner also called on the Secretary General and member nations to intercede with Iran. Finally, Kirchner called on the GOI to collaborate in the application of international legal norms to help arrive at the truth. He concluded that Argentina expects "nothing more, but nothing less."

**¶13. (U)** The press coverage and comment in Argentina has been uniformly positive. The opinion piece in leading daily "Clarín" stated that President Kirchner's speech held a firm, demanding tone on Iran, enabling him to walk the thin line between the local Jewish community lobby and Iranian threats.

Noted commentator and political analyst Joaquin Morales Sola, in "La Nación," wrote that it was about time Kirchner dropped all euphemisms in referring to the Iranian government and said it must be acknowledged that Kirchner has done quite a lot in support of the AMIA investigation.

**¶14. (U)** Kirchner's delegation traveled to New York with representatives from the main Jewish organizations, AMIA and DAIA, and with representatives of the "Family and Friends of the Victims of AMIA." They figured prominently in local news reports commenting positively on Kirchner's speech. DAIA President Aldo Donzis congratulated Kirchner, saying his

speech was brave and timely. AMIA President Luis Grynwald called Kirchner's comments encouraging and said they reflected AMIA and DAIA goals. Sergio Burstein of the "Family and Friends of AMIA" stated that Kirchner had stuck to his promise to raise the issue at the UN. Dina Siegal Vann of the American Jewish Committee is reported to have applauded Kirchner's speech, noting that the President had made the AMIA case a central theme and further praised him for calling on the international community to join Argentina in its efforts to identify and bring the perpetrators to justice.

¶ 15. (U) Iran's Charge d'Affairs in Buenos Aires Mohsen Baharvand told the press that Iran had already started cooperating with Argentina's judicial system in receiving and responding to letters rogatory. (Note: This "cooperation" is a fairly recent development, only initiated when the GOI's efforts to block the international capture notices at INTERPOL's Executive Committee failed. Iran had failed for years to respond to Argentine letters rogatory in the case. End note.) Baharvand is reported to have called for the two countries to start negotiating through their delegations at the UN and said this was an issue for the judicial systems of the two countries. He omitted any comment on the eventual willingness of the GOI to allow its indicted citizens to answer charges in Argentina.

¶ 16. (U) A former president of the Islamic Arab-Argentina Association and former head of the Arabic-Argentine Entities, Adalberto Assad, expressed his community's wish that Argentina not blame a nation (Iran) for the attack. Assad also thought the President's comments had been "lighter" than expected since he had couched his demand in judicial terms and had called on the international community in helping to resolve the case.

¶ 17. (C) EmbOffs spoke with AMIA special prosecutor Alberto Nisman, MFA AMIA liaison Ambassador Guillermo Gonzalez, other MFA officials and political analysts at an Embassy-hosted event that evening. All were positive about the speech. Nisman was openly excited. Earlier on in his investigation, and just prior to issuing indictments in 2006, Nisman reported to the Embassy that he felt he did not have full political support for his efforts. He said he felt vindicated by the President's very public support at UNGA. Gonzalez confirmed that the President's comments were very important in lining up international support. Gonzalez told the Ambassador that the portion of Kirchner's speech regarding Iran was stronger and lengthier than what the MFA had provided to Kirchner, indicative to him that Kirchner inserted additional language into the speech, making an even firmer call for GOI cooperation and international support. Gonzalez and Nisman plan to go to Morocco for the November 5-8 INTERPOL General Assembly meeting. In response to a question about the investigation, Nisman relayed that he is firming up the evidence linking elements in the tri-border area to the AMIA bombing and hoped to have it ready before the Morocco General Assembly.

WAYNE